(d) if so, the rationale thereof?

THE MINISTER OF FOOD AND MINISTER OF CIVIL SUPPLIES, CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI DEVENDRA PRASAD YADAV): (a) to (d). The Madhya Pradesh Government invited applications for prospecting of Diamonds and Alexandrite in South-Eastern part of Raipur District in April, 1994. In response 23 applicants, including some Indian public sector and private sector companies applied. The State Government has selected the following applicants for grant of prospecting rights and has sought Central Government's prior approval under Mines and Minerals (Regulation and Development) Act, 1957:—

(i) De Beers (India) Prospecting Ltd.

(ii) M/s CRA Exploration (India) Ltd. and

(iii) M/s Ashton Mining India Pvt. Ltd.

However, the Central Government has returned this proposal to the State Government of Madhya Pradesh and has asked the State Government to re-examine the proposal in the light of the guidelines communicated to the State Governments by the Central Government by letter dated 30.10.1996 on issue of grant of prospecting licence over large areas.

Involvement of a voluntary organisation in selling of Children

1013. SMT. KAMLA SINHA: Will the Minister of WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government had asked the State Govt. of Orissa for a report on the alleged involvement of 'Basundhra' a voluntary Organisation in the selling of children in the name of adoption;

(b) if so, the details of the report submitted by the State Govt. in this regard; and

(c) the action taken/proposed to be taken by the Government in the matter?

THE MINISTER OF WELFARE (SHRI BALWANT SINGH RAMOOWALIA): (a) to (c) This Ministry has received a number of complaints and allegations from senior citizens of Cuttack as well as MLAs of Orissa Government stating that the organisation Basundhra is involved in malafide activities which inter-alia relate to selling of children in name of adoption. The State Commission for Women had also asked for investigation of the activities of placement agencies in Orissa including that of Basundhra. The Government has contacted the appropriate authorities under the Government of India to conduct an investigation of the activities of this organisation and submit a report which is awaited. The State Government has not been asked to submit a report. However, they have been informed of the action taken by this Ministry.

Supply of Rice and Wheat to the poor at half the normal price under PDS

1014. SHRI RAJUBHAI A. PARMAR:
SHRIMATI VEENA VERMA:
SHRI SUSHILKUMAR SAMBHAJI-RAO SHINDE:

Will the Minister of CIVIL SUPPLIES, CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have decided to supply a certain quantity of rice and wheat at half the normal price for the poor under Public Distribution System as announced by PM in his Independence Day speech on August 15, 1996;

(b) if so, how much it will cost the Central Government by way of enhanced subsidy; and

(c) the steps being taken to identify the poor for whom the subsidy is meant and to ensure that the benefit of the scheme reaches them?

THE MINISTER OF FOOD AND MINISTER OF CIVIL SUPPLIES, CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI DEVENDRA PRASAD YADAV): (a) to (c) Yes, Sir. The issue of streamlining the PDS with focus on the poor by issuing commodities at half the normal issue price to the population below poverty line as announced by the Prime Minister in his Independence Day Address on August 15, 1996 is under consideration of the Government.